

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS



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1973-74 series

FINAL CONCERT OF THE SEASON

Guest Composer:

GEORGE CRUMB

(first appearance in Canada)

Saturday, March 30, 1974

8:30 p.m.

Walter Hall

Edward Johnson Building

University of Toronto

SPECIAL NOTICE

Thanks to the enthusiastic response from our growing audience, **New Music Concerts**, in only three seasons, has helped to make Toronto into a significant international centre for contemporary music.

Our next season promises to be very exciting, with the presence of such distinguished composers as **Lukas Foss** (U.S.A.), **Toru Takemitsu** (Japan), **Mauricio Kagel** (Argentina-Germany), and many others. Special programmes are also being planned, including one devoted to commemorating the **100th Anniversary of Schoenberg's birth**.

In order to continue to commission new Canadian works, to bring internationally-known composers to this city and to perform the latest and most interesting compositions with Toronto's top musicians, we depend on the three levels of Government for financial support. We also depend on you!

Your donation, however small — \$1.00, \$5.00, etc., would be wonderful and greatly appreciated.

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PROGRAMME

DEVOTED TO THE MUSIC OF GEORGE CRUMB

LUX AETERNA (for the Children of the Night) (1972) for Five Masked Musicians

Mary Morrison, soprano
Robert Aitken, flute
Shambhu Das, sitar
Robin Engelman & John Wyre, percussion

BLACK ANGELS (Thirteen Images from the Dark Land) (1970) for Electric String Quartet

Orford String Quartet:

Andrew Dawes, violin	Terence Helmer, viola
Kenneth Perkins, violin	Marcel St-Cyr, cello

INTERMISSION

VOICE OF THE WHALE (Vox Balaenae) (1971) for Three Masked Players

Robert Aitken, flute
Marcel St-Cyr, cello
John Hawkins, piano

ANCIENT VOICES OF CHILDREN (1970)

Mary Morrison, soprano
Paul Pickles, boy soprano
Melvin Berman, oboe
William Kuinka, mandolin
Erica Goodman, harp
John Hawkins, electric piano
Allen Beard, Robin Engelman & John Wyre, percussion

— Robert Aitken, conductor —

Electronics by James Montgomery of the
Canadian Electronic Ensemble

GEORGE CRUMB

Born in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1929, George Crumb's principal teachers in composition were Ross Lee Finney at the University of Michigan and Boris Blacher at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, Germany. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including grants from the Fulbright Commission, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the Rockefeller, Koussevitzky, Guggenheim and Coolidge Foundations. In 1968 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his **Echoes of Time and the River: Four Processionals for Orchestra**. Since 1965 Mr. Crumb has been a Professor of Composition at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

PROGRAMME NOTES

LUX AETERNA (for the Children of the Night) for Five Masked Musicians

In *Lux Aeterna*, Crumb's growing concern with ritual finds its most articulate (so far) expression. As point of departure he takes a ritual which has fascinated composers for a thousand years — the requiem mass.

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine.
Requiem Aeternam dona eis,
Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

May eternal light shine upon them
O Lord, Grant them everlasting
rest, O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon them.

In his hands, and under obvious Indian influence, the eternal light becomes the primal light of the Vedas, the source of all things illusory or real, than which there is no other.

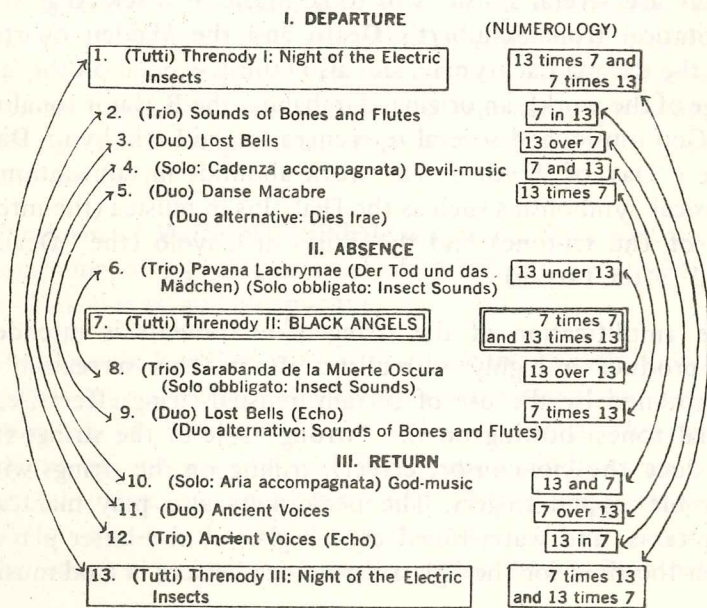
Lux Aeterna was written in 1972 for soprano, bass flute (and recorder), sitar and two percussionists. The following is taken from a review in **the village VOICE**, written after a performance of its New York premiere:

"A candle is lit and the ceremonious music begins: bell sounds, sustained bassoon notes, bowed cymbal effects, many other curious sounds, most of them altered with eerie elec-

tronic wa-wa effects. Somehow the music begins to alternate between classical Indian sections and sections where the soprano sings the Latin text with very florid lines. The whole piece is quite sparse, and it never once loses the intense ominous mood suggested by the costumes.

The most remarkable thing about the piece is that every single sound in it seems to be just right. The sitar, the electronic devices, and the bizarre instrumental effects are never used for their own sake, but always to specify some exact shading of sound."

BLACK ANGELS (Thirteen Images from the Dark Land) for electric string quartet



Black Angels was conceived as a kind of parable on our troubled contemporary world. The numerous quasi-programmatic allusions in the work are therefore symbolic, although the essential polarity — God versus Devil — implies more than a purely metaphysical reality.

The underlying structure of **Black Angels** is a huge arch-like design which is suspended from the three "Threnody" pieces. The work portrays a voyage of the soul. The three stages of this voyage are Departure, Absence, and Return.

The numerological symbolism of **Black Angels**, while perhaps not immediately perceptible to the ear, is nonetheless quite faithfully reflected in the musical structure. These "magical" relationships are variously expressed — e.g., in terms of phrase-length, groupings for single tones, durations, patterns of repetition, etc. An important pitch element in the work — ascending D-sharp, A, and E — also symbolizes the fateful numbers 7 & 13. At certain points in the score there occurs a kind of ritualistic counting in various languages, including German, French, Russian, Hungarian, Japanese, and Swahili.

There are several allusions to tonal music in **Black Angels**: a quotation from Schubert's **Death and the Maiden** quartet (in the Pavana Lachrymae, and also faintly echoed on the last page of the work); an original Sarabanda; the B Major tonality of God-music; and several references to the Latin hymn **Dies Irae** ("Day of Wrath"). The work abounds in conventional musical symbolisms such as the Diabolus in musica (the interval of the tri-tone) and the Trillo di diavolo (the "Devil's trill", after Tartini).

The amplification of the stringed instruments is intended to produce a highly surrealistic effect. This surrealism is heightened by the use of certain unusual string effects, e.g. pedal tones; bowing on the "wrong" side of the strings (to produce the viol-consort effect); trilling on the strings with thimble-capped fingers. The performers also play maracas, tam-tams, and water-tuned crystal glasses, the latter played with the bow for the "glass-harmonica" effect in God-music.

Black Angels was commissioned by the University of Michigan and first performed by the Stanley Quartet. The score is inscribed: "finished on Friday the Thirteenth, March, 1970 (in tempore belli)."

— George Crumb —

VOICE OF THE WHALE (*Vox Balaenae*) for Three Masked Players

Vocalise (. . . for the beginning of time)

Variations on Sea-Theme

Sea-theme

Archeozoic (Var. I)

Proterozoic (Var. II)

Paleozoic (Var. III)

Mesozoic (Var. IV)

Cenozoic (Var. V)

Sea-Nocturne (. . . for the end of time)

"Voice of the Whale (*Vox Balaenae*) composed in 1971, is scored for flute, cello, and piano (all amplified in concert performance). The work was inspired by the singing of the humpback whale, a tape recording of which I had heard two or three years previously. The masks, by effacing the sense of human projection, are intended to represent, symbolically, the powerful impersonal forces of nature (i.e. nature dehumanized).

The form of **Voice of the Whale** is a simple three-part design, consisting of a prologue, a set of variations named after the geological eras, and an epilogue.

The opening **Vocalise** (marked in the score: "wildly fantastic, grotesque") is a kind of cadenza for the flutist, who simultaneously plays his instrument and sings into it. This combination of instrumental and vocal sound produces an eerie, surreal timbre, not unlike the sounds of the humpback whale. The conclusion of the cadenza is announced by a parody of the opening measures of Strauss' **Also Sprach Zarathustra**.

The **Sea-Theme** ("solemn, with calm majesty") is presented by the cello (in harmonics), accompanied by dark, fateful chords of strummed piano strings. The following sequence of variations begins with the haunting sea-gull cries of the **Archeozoic** ("timeless, inchoate") and, gradually increasing in intensity, reaches a strident climax in the **Cenozoic** ("dramatic, with a feeling of destiny"). The emergence of man in the cenozoic era is symbolized by a restatement of the **Zarathustra** reference.

The concluding **Sea-Nocturne** ("serene, pure, transfigured") is an elaboration of the **Sea-Theme**. In composing the **Sea-Nocturne** I wanted to suggest "a larger rhythm of nature" and a sense of suspension in time."

— George Crumb —

ANCIENT VOICES OF CHILDREN

Composed during the summer of 1970 on commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, **Ancient Voices of Children** has received both the International Rostrum of Composers Award (UNESCO), Paris, and the Koussevitzky International Recording Award. The work forms part of an extended cycle of vocal compositions based on the modern Spanish poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca which includes **Night Music I** (1963), four books of **Madrigals** (1965-69), **Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death** (1968) and **Night of the Four Moons** (1969). **Ancient Voices of Children** was first performed on October 31, 1970, as part of the Coolidge Foundation's 14th Festival of Chamber Music at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

From the composer's notes:

"In **Ancient Voices**, as in my earlier Lorca settings, I have sought musical images that enhance and reinforce the powerful, yet strangely haunting imagery of Lorca's poetry. I feel that the essential meaning of this poetry is concerned with the most primary things: life, death, love, the smell of the earth, the sounds of the wind and the sea.

The texts are fragments of longer poems which I have grouped into a sequence that seemed to suggest a 'larger rhythm' in terms of musical continuity. The two purely instrumental movements — **Dances of the Ancient Earth** and **Ghost Dance** — are dance interludes rather than commentaries on the texts.

Perhaps the most characteristic vocal effect is produced by the mezzo-soprano singing a kind of fantastic vocalise (based on purely phonetic sounds) into an amplified piano, thereby producing a shimmering aura of echoes. The inclusion of a part for boy soprano seemed the best solution for those passages in the text where Lorca clearly implies a child's voice.

In composing **Ancient Voices of Children**, I was conscious of an urge to fuse various unrelated stylistic elements. I was intrigued with the idea of juxtaposing the seemingly incongruous: a suggestion of Flamenco with a Baroque quotation **Bist du bei mir**, (from the Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach), or a reminiscence of Mahler with a breath of the Orient.

It is sometimes of interest to a composer to recall the original impulse — the “creative germ” — of a compositional project. In the case of **Ancient Voices** I felt this impulse to be the climactic final words of the last song: “. . . and I will go very far . . . to ask Christ the Lord to give me back my ancient soul of a child.”

- I The little boy was looking for his voice.
 (The king of the crickets had it.)
 in a drop of water
 the little boy was looking for his voice.

I do not want it for speaking with;
I will make a ring of it
so that he may wear my silence
on his little finger.

Dances of the Ancient Earth (for oboe, mandolin, harp
and percussion)

- II I have lost myself in the sea many times
 with my ear full of freshly cut flowers,
 with my tongue full of love and agony,
 as I lose myself in the heart of certain children.
- III (Dance of the Sacred Life Cycle)
 From where do you come, my love, my child?
 From the ridge of hard frost.
 What do you need, my love, my child?
 The warm cloth of your dress.
 Let the branches ruffle in the sun and
 the fountains leap around you!
 What do you ask for, my child, from so far away?
 The white mountains of your breast.
 I'll tell you, my child, yes,
 I am torn and broken for you.
 When, my child, will you come?
 When your flesh smells of jasmine-flowers.

IV Each afternoon in Granada,
a child dies each afternoon.

Ghost Dance (for mandolin and maracas)

V My heart of silk is filled with lights,
with lost bells, with lilies, and with bees,
and I will go very far,
farther than those hills, farther than the seas,
close to the stars,
to ask Christ the Lord
to give me back
my ancient soul of a child.

The 1973-74 season of **New Music Concerts** is recorded by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the radio series **Music of Today**, heard Wednesday evenings from 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on CBL-FM.

This evening's performance can be heard on the **June 12th** broadcast of **Music of Today**.

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